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RUEHAK/AMEMBASSY ANKARA PRIORITY 3690  
RUEHBUL/AMEMBASSY KABUL PRIORITY 0114  
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RUEKDIA/DIA WASHDC PRIORITY  
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC PRIORITY  
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC PRIORITY  
RUEHBS/USEU BRUSSELS PRIORITY  
RUEHNO/USMISSION USNATO PRIORITY 0959  
RUEHVEN/USMISSION USOSCE PRIORITY 1530

S E C R E T SECTION 01 OF 02 BAKU 000927

SIPDIS

STATE FOR EUR/CARC, DAS KAIDANOW  
DEFENSE FOR DASD WALLANDER, MELLEBY

E.O. 12958: DECL: 12/01/2034

TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [ENRG](#) [IR](#) [AF](#) [AM](#) [AJ](#)

SUBJECT: AZERBAIJAN: FOREIGN MINISTER DISCUSSES POSSIBLE  
OEF CONTRIBUTION, IRAN WITH DASD WALLANDER

Classified By: Charge Donald Lu, Reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

Summary

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11. (S) DASD Dr. Celeste Wallander met with Azerbaijani Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov in Baku November 23. On Afghanistan, the Minister argued against large troop increases but did not totally close off the possibility of EUCOM assessing Azerbaijani forces for a TEP. He said Azerbaijan had confirmed the presence of foreigners on the Iran Alborz semisubmersible drilling rig and questioned DASD Wallander about U.S. views on Iranian intentions and Russia's equities in the situation. He continued to press for U.S. sales of air defense equipment and said Azerbaijan would be open to cost-sharing with the United States to upgrade the Nasosnaya air base for expanded cooperation with Afghanistan logistics, but explained that security concerns on Baku's part made expanded use of Heydar Aliyev airport problematic. End Summary.

Afghanistan/TEP/NDN and Airfields

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12. (C) Mammadyarov told DASD Wallander that Azerbaijan doubts that increasing U.S. and NATO force levels in Afghanistan will have the desired effect. Citing reports of Ambassador Eikenberry's opposition to sending additional troops, the Minister said Azerbaijan held the same view. (Note: In a separate meeting with Charge, Mammadyarov cited the Ambassador's reported views as a reason for instructing Deputy Foreign Minister Azimov to insist at the November 4 Security Dialogue in Washington that any TEP for Azerbaijan be de-linked from a commitment to deploy to Afghanistan. This does not ring true, as November 4 preceded press reports of Amb. Eikenberry's views. End Note.) Mammadyarov argued that more troops would alienate the Afghan people and that the civil and social element of the mission has eclipsed the military side in importance. DASD Wallander did not question the importance of social issues and empowering the Afghan government, but maintained that those goals can only be achieved with greater security.

13. (C) On the TEP, Mammadyarov asked for assurances that accepting the assessment team from EUCOM would not entail a

commitment from Azerbaijan, and also that if a TEP went forward, that it could be de-linked from an Afghanistan commitment. DASD Wallander and DATT explained that TEP is funded through Coalition Support Funds (CSF), which are linked to service with ISAF. However, she added, the assessment visit implies absolutely no commitment, and would gather the information necessary for Baku to decide if a TEP is right for Azerbaijan. Mammadyarov asked to have DASD Wallander's answers in writing as a response to his Ministry's diplomatic note of November 16, in which Baku laid out its conditions for moving forward with the assessment visit.

¶4. (C) DASD Wallander also praised Azerbaijan's contributions to the Northern Distribution Network (NDN) and expressed U.S. interest in increasing cargo throughput in Azerbaijan, perhaps by expanding access to Heydar Aliyev airport in Baku, or at the airport in Azerbaijan's second-largest city of Ganja. Mammadyarov said that he was "very reluctant" to expand U.S. military access to Azerbaijani civilian facilities, alluding to increased threats of terrorism against sites known to be hosting U.S. assets. However, he floated the idea of jointly upgrading the Azerbaijani air base at Nasosnaya, northwest of Baku, indicating Azerbaijan would be open to sharing the considerable cost of such a project.

Iran and Alborz  
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¶5. (S) Mammadyarov told DASD Wallander that Azerbaijan had confirmed the presence of foreigners on board the Iran Alborz semisubmersible drilling rig, which has moved north of the Iran-USSR treaty line in the south Caspian toward the disputed Alborz (Alov) offshore field. He said that Azerbaijan had intercepted communications and that he was "shocked" to find that most of the rig was manned by "Norwegians." Mammadyarov asked DASD Wallander how far Iran could go "irritating the situation." He said that Iranian vessels had not defied challenges by the Azerbaijan Coast Guard yet, however he had been briefed that Iran was about to deploy an anti-ship missile-armed vessel to the area. (DAO Comment: DIA will continue to share information on Iranian naval developments with Azerbaijan under the auspices of an intelligence exchange program, recently extended by both parties. End Comment.)

¶6. (S) Mammadyarov also asked whether Iranian behavior in the Persian Gulf was so provocative and how DASD Wallander believed Russia viewed the situation. She replied that it did not seem sensible for Iran to raise tensions in the Caspian amid the ongoing tensions surrounding its nuclear program. DASD Wallander confirmed to Mammadyarov that the United States supports plans to transfer spent nuclear fuel from Iranian facilities to Russia. Russia has always lamented the lack of clarity in cross-Caspian relations, she continued, and added that Russian-Iranian relations were complicated by the disclosure of the Qom facility, which caught Moscow off-guard. Mammadyarov agreed, opining that Iran had "humiliated" Russia by rejecting deals that Moscow had negotiated in Iran's interest. He added that the domestic politics, combined with the Supreme Leader's declining health, is also a factor.

Arms Sales  
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¶7. (C) The Minister repeated to DASD Wallander Azerbaijan's interest in purchasing air defense systems from the United States, and said the Defense Ministry had been working on a new list of desirable items. However, he complained that Section 907 made this cooperation "problematic." DASD Wallander responded that 907 had not prevented the range of

cooperation currently going on, nor would it interfere with a TEP, if Azerbaijan went that route.

18. (U) This message has been cleared by DASD Wallander.

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